

YOM KIPPUR

יום כפור

Niggun: (a song without words)

נגון

(Contributed by Judy Romano)

Steve Mullinax: Welcome

(The first two readings were taken from Machar's *Yom Kippur* ceremony.)

BEMA READER: On this day of *Yom Kippur* we come together-- friends, families, neighbors--united by a common need and a common bond. Our need at this season is to renew our lives-- to go forward into the new year stronger, wiser, kinder than we were before. Our bond is the kinship of our shared humanity and our common love for Judaism and the Jewish people.

READER: On this day, it is fitting to honor the thousands of years of history Jews have shared as we observe an ancient and sacred tradition in a new and special way. If this is a day of remembrance, it is also a day of renewal. If this is a time for atonement, it is also a time for hope. If this is the season to assess our worth as individuals, it is also appropriate at this season to reaffirm our connection with the international Jewish family and those who came before us.

READER: Ancestors have a powerful effect on us. Even after their death, they linger in memory to guide our lives. When we remember ancestors, we must also think of our posterity. A living people not only stretches back to the past, it also reaches forward to the future. What *will* happen to our people is as important as what *did* happen.

READER: Just as our ancestors were the children of their past, so are we the ancestors of our future. Just as they refashioned holidays and ceremonies to serve their posterity, so do we re-examine ritual and instruction of earlier years to serve our children.

READER: Ceremonies fulfill deep human needs. They can be a celebration and public reminder of what we cherish most dearly.

CANDLE LIGHTING



נרות

BEMA READER: We call up our candle lighters.

ALL SING: Let Us Light These Lights

(By Debbie Friedman. Adapted by Rabbi Daniel Freedman)

**Let us light these lights
And see the way to joy
And let us say *simkha*. (Repeat verse.)**

**Let us light these lights
And see the way to love
And let us say *ahava*. (Repeat verse.)**

**Let us light these lights
And see the way to peace
And let us say *shalom*. (Repeat verse.)**

FIRST CANDLE LIGHTER (Reads while second lighter kindles the candles): We light these candles to draw in the light, to create a peaceful interlude for ourselves and set our minds at rest.

SECOND CANDLE LIGHTER: We light these candles to revitalize our ties to the past, to rekindle our determination to remember the tenacious spirit of the Jewish people, to remember the ties to our families and friends, to remember the moments of beauty and calm, and to remember the times of love and laughter.

ALL SING:

Ba-rukh ha-or ba-o-lam.

Ba-rukh ha-or ba-a-a-a-a-dam.

Ba-rukh ha-or b'sha-lom,

B'sha-lom, ba-rukh ha-or,

Ba-rukh ha-or

Shel Yo-o-o-om Kipur!

בְּרוּךְ הָאוֹר בְּעוֹלָם.

בְּרוּךְ הָאוֹר בְּאָדָם.

בְּרוּךְ הָאוֹר בְּשָׁלוֹם,

בְּשָׁלוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הָאוֹר,

בְּרוּךְ הָאוֹר

שֶׁל יוֹם כִּפּוּר!

ALL: Precious is the light within the world.
 Precious is the light within each person.
 Precious is the light of peace.
 Precious is the light of *Yom Kippur!*



BEMA READER: Since ancient times, parents have offered aspirations to their children on the eve of festivals. We take this time to offer these hopes for all the children of the world, as well as those here with us and within our hearts this *Rosh Hashanah*:

READER: May you always feel deeply your own worth.
 May you always be comforted in your sorrows and delight in the richness and complexity of the world.

READER: May you experience the joys of learning, nature, and friendship. May you know the rewards of thinking, questioning, and discovering.

READER: May you have wisdom and courage as you face life's challenges. May you always grow in your power to love.

BEMA READER: As in the words of this next song, may your life grant you a world rich in peace, goodness, and blessing:

ALL SING: *Sim Shalom*

*Sim, sim, sim shalom,
 Sim, sim, sim shalom,
 Sim, sim, sim shalom
 tovah oo' v'rakhah.
 Ya la la la la la la la la,
 Ya la la la la la la la la,
 Ya la la la la la la la la,
 Ya la la, ya la la la.*

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם

שִׁים, שִׁים, שִׁים שְׁלוֹם
 שִׁים, שִׁים, שִׁים שְׁלוֹם
 שִׁים, שִׁים, שִׁים שְׁלוֹם
 טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה.
 י ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל,
 י ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל,
 י ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל ל,
 י ל ל י ל ל ל.

(Translation: Grant peace, welfare, and blessing.)

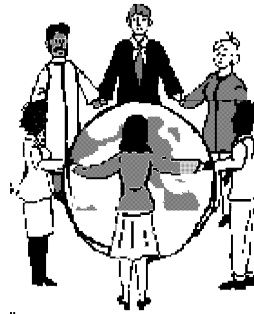
BEMA READER: We rise to celebrate our connection to the Jewish people and to affirm the dignity of *all* people. Please stand.

Sh'ma! (Hear!)

שְׁמַע !

ALL SING:

*Sh'ma Yis-ra-el,
E-khad a-mey-nu,
A-dam e-khad.
Ba-rukh ha-o-lam.
Am Yis-ra-el khai,
L'o-lam vah-ed.*



**שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל,
אֶחָד עִמָּנוּ,
אָדָם אֶחָד.
בְּרוּךְ הָעוֹלָם.
עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל חַי,
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.**

ALL: Hear O Israel,
Our people are one.
All humanity is one.
Precious is the world.
May the people Israel live forever and ever.

BEMA READER: Please be seated.

ALL: Therefore, we shall strive to lead compassionate lives
With our heart, with our wisdom, and with our actions.
We shall inscribe this intention in our innermost heart.
We shall aspire to practice it day and night.
Diligently, we shall teach a humane way of life to our children
through our words and deeds.
For their union with the ancients,
we shall tell them of ancient days,
of doorpost signs, phylacteries:
our ancestors' ways for remembering, treasuring
Torah's words.

READER: Humanistic Judaism is more than a statement of belief. It is more than an intellectual commitment. It is more than a set of ideas about people and the universe. Humanistic Judaism is a way of life. Its ideals find expression through daily actions.

ALL SING: *B'Khol Adam*

B'khol a-dam,

A-ha-vah v'see-nah,

Tov v'ra-shah,

Tov v'ra-shah,

Kha-yeem u-ma-vet.

(Repeat)

בְּכֹל אָדָם

, בְּכֹל אָדָם,

אֶהְבֶּה וְשִׂנְאָה,

טוֹב וְרָשָׁע,

טוֹב וְרָשָׁע,

חַיִּים וּמָוֹת.

(Repeat)

(In each person there is love and hatred, good and evil, life and death.)

READER: Throughout the ages, the several weeks prior *Yom Kippur* had been a time to ask others for forgiveness, whereas *Yom Kippur* itself had been a time to ask God for forgiveness. In Humanistic Judaism, *Yom Kippur* is a time for each of us to find the strength and courage to forgive *ourselves*.

READER: As we strive to improve ourselves and the world through our actions, let us not grow discouraged by our imperfections, challenges, and regressions. Personal challenge and self-doubt have *always* been an integral part of human existence, even among the *seemingly* most heroic and righteous:

READER: "Who shall stand for us in this holy place? There is no one but us. There is no one to send, nor a clean hand, nor a pure heart on the face of the earth, nor in the earth, but only us, a generation comforting ourselves with the notion that we have come at an awkward time, that our innocent fathers are all dead -- as if innocence had ever been -- and our children busy and troubled, and we ourselves unfit, not yet ready, having each of us chosen wrongly, made a false start, failed, yielded to impulse and the tangled comfort of pleasures, and grown exhausted, unable to seek the thread, weak, and involved. But there is no one but us. There never has been."

(Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm*)

RESPONSIVE READING

BEMA READER: I have seen violence scar the face of our planet; yet I did not speak.

ALL: I have heard the cries of hungry children; yet I did not speak.

BEMA READER: I have seen poverty and disease; yet I did not speak.

ALL: I have witnessed the pain and suffering of others; yet I did not speak.

BEMA READER: I have seen friends reach out in pain; yet I did not speak.

ALL: I, too, have been in pain; yet I did not speak.

BEMA READER: I have wanted to scream out in rage against injustice; yet I did not speak.

ALL: I have wanted to laugh with joy; yet I did not speak.

BEMA READER: I have wanted to share words of love; yet I did not speak.

ALL: Yet there are moments of outrage, pain and joy when I did speak. May I always have the courage to speak what must be spoken.

Kol Nidrei כָּל-נִדְרֵי

CANTOR DAVID MAIER:

כָּל-נִדְרֵי וְאֶסְרֵי וְחַרְמֵי וְקוֹנָמֵי וְכַנּוּיֵי וְקוֹנוּסֵי וְשְׁבוּעוֹת, דְּנִדְרָנָא וְדִאֲשְׁתַּבְּעָנָא וְדִאֲחַרְמִינָא, וְדִאֲסַרְנָא עַל נַפְשֵׁתָנָא, מִיּוֹם כְּפוּרִים זֶה עַד יוֹם כְּפוּרִים הֵבֵא עָלֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה, כְּלִהוֹן אַחֲרֵטָנָא בְּהוֹן, כְּלִהוֹן יְהוֹן שְׁנוֹן, שְׁבִיקוֹן, שְׁבִיתוֹן, בְּטִלִין וּמְבַטְלִין, לֹא שְׁרִירִין וְלֹא קִיּוּמִין. נִדְרָנָא לֹא נִדְרֵי, וְאֶסְרָנָא לֹא אֶסְרֵי, וְשְׁבוּעָתָנָא לֹא שְׁבוּעוֹת.

(Translation from the Aramaic: Let all our vows and oaths, all the promises we make and the obligations we incur to ourselves and others between this *Yom Kippur* and the next be null and void, should we, after honest effort find ourselves unable to fulfill them. Then may we be released from them. For a fuller historical explanation of the *Kol Nidrei* itself, see the addendum on page 25.)

BEMA READER: The melody we just heard is a very old song called "*Kol Nidrei*." It is so old that we do not know who composed it. All we know is that for these many years the Jewish people have listened to it at this time of year, just as you and I did. For the Jewish people, this song seems like a bird which soars. The melody carries our spirits up into the sky with it. It brings us memories of the year past; it carries us into the New Year. The heartache of the *Kol Nidrei* should serve to remind us of how fortunate we are to live in a time and place where we can speak freely and make vows which truly express our beliefs.

ALL: Today we ask not to be released from our vows; instead we look for the courage, inspiration, and strength to realize them, and an opportunity to try again when we do not. Asking forgiveness is, for us, the beginning of our efforts to *fulfill* our promises.

RESPONSIVE READING

BEMA READER: In all that we say and do from this *Yom Kippur* to the next, we will do our best to keep every promise.

ALL: To fulfill every good intention and every resolution that we make.

BEMA READER: But if there are promises that we truly cannot keep, however hard we try,

ALL: We hope others will forgive us for our failings.

BEMA READER: And we ask forgiveness, too, for those promises we could not keep in the year now ended.

ALL: We ask forgiveness for those promises we could not keep in the year now ended.

BEMA READER: Each of us possesses the power to know more than each of us does.

ALL: But we are often too busy and resistant to learn.

BEMA READER: Each of us possesses the strength to do more than each of us does.

ALL: But we are often too tired to act.

BEMA READER: Without learning and without active participation, we do not live up to what we are and what we can be.

ALL: The more we are able to see, the more we look for.

BEMA READER: The more we question, the more there is to question.

ALL: The more we experience, the more we want to experience.

BEMA READER: These things that will benefit us and our world, we will hear and we will do.

ALL: Nish-mah v'nah-a-seh! (נִשְׁמַע וְנַעֲשֶׂה) We will hear and we will do!

Kol Nidrei

כָּל-נִדְרֵי

Opus 47, Max Bruch (1838-1920)

Cellist: Jerry Bobbe

Pianist: Janet Guggenheim

READER: Jewish survival is more than the reverence for tradition. It is a story of deep attachment to the values that define us as a community. Judaism is a living culture of a living people, changing and evolving.

READER: We are a world people that encompasses the globe. We are an international family. And yet, no matter the nation in which we reside, our greatest journeys take place within us.

READER: When we sit still, we can listen carefully; we can hear ourselves breathing and our hearts beating. We can hear our inner selves speaking quietly to us of what we know and what we feel.

BEMA READER: We take this moment for meditation or silent reading.

SILENT READING WITH MUSIC

"Meditators since the beginning of time have known that they must use their own eyes and the language of their own times to express their insight. Wisdom is a living stream, not an icon to be preserved in a museum. Only when a practitioner finds the spring of wisdom in his or her own life can it flow to future generations. Keeping the torch of wisdom glowing is the work of all of us who know how to clear a path through the forest in order to walk on ahead."

(Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Sun in My Heart*)

BEMA READER: *Yom Kippur* is a day of hope. We remember that the survival of our people depended on many skills and on many strategies.

READER: We acknowledge that the will to live found new paths in the moment when it was necessary to see them. What is now old was once new. What is now sacred was once profane, a bold insight that the fearful rejected.

READER: We resolve this day to choose hope. Our optimism is essential to our survival. It nurtures our will to live.

ALL: **With all our might we enforce the power of hope.
With all our will we affirm the pursuit of life.**

READER: TBA **Let It Be**

(Naomi Shemer; translated from Hebrew by Julie Hirsh)

Against the black cloud in the distance
See a white sail, like a dream.
All we ask is peace, let it be.
And in the evening windows, let it be for joy that candles gleam--
All we ask is peace, let it be.

What is that anguished cry I hear, above the shofar, sounds of war?
All we ask is peace, let it be...
Above the battle, keep repeating my one plea now, as before:
All we ask is peace, let it be.

And should the sun break through the darkness,
Starlight stream from skies above,
All we ask is peace, let it be...
Give life again to dreams of peace and ease of heart
to those we love,
All we ask is peace, let it be.

On Heroism and Celebration

READER: *Yom Kippur* is a day of memory. We offer our tribute to all who valued their Jewish identity and helped it endure. We salute the heroes of our past who did not hesitate to do something new in order to save something old.

READER: Jewish history is more than a tale of woe. It is a dramatic parade of splendid events and bold heroes. It is the saga of a small nation transformed into a world people. Triumph, as well as suffering, belong to our memories.

READER: We resolve this day to see the joy of the Jewish experience. We will not hover over our martyrs alone and ignore the countless millions who were happily Jewish. We will not remember the terrible lands from which we were expelled and forget the comfortable places that offered us hospitality.

READER: We will not dwell on the cruelty of those who saw us as enemies and neglect to appreciate the strangers who became our loyal friends. Our history deserves more than wailing. It has also earned laughter and cheers.

ALL: If we carried burdens, we also danced.

Shalom L'Yisrael

CANTOR DAVID MAIER:

*Sha-lom, sha-lom l'Yis-ra-el,
Sha-lom, sha-lom l'a-dam,
Sha-lom l'Yis-ra-el, sha-lom,
Sha-lom, sha-lom l'o-lam.*

ALL:

*Sim-khah, sim-khah l'Yis-ra-el,
Sim-khah, sim-khah l'a-dam,
Sim-khah l'Yis-ra-el, sim-khah,
Sim-khah, sim-khah l'o-lam.*

*E-met, e-met l'Yis-ra-el,
E-met, e-met l'a-dam,
E-met l'Yis-ra-el, e-met,
E-met, e-met l'o-lam.*

(Repeat first verse)

(Peace, joy, and truth to Israel, to humanity, and to the world.)

שְׁלוֹם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל

שְׁלוֹם, שְׁלוֹם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
שְׁלוֹם, שְׁלוֹם לְאָדָם,
שְׁלוֹם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁלוֹם,
שְׁלוֹם, שְׁלוֹם לְעוֹלָם.

שְׂמֵחָה, שְׂמֵחָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
שְׂמֵחָה, שְׂמֵחָה לְאָדָם,
שְׂמֵחָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׂמֵחָה,
שְׂמֵחָה, שְׂמֵחָה לְעוֹלָם.

אֱמֶת, אֱמֶת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
אֱמֶת, אֱמֶת לְאָדָם,
אֱמֶת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֱמֶת,
אֱמֶת, אֱמֶת לְעוֹלָם.

(Repeat first verse)

CLOSING נְעִילָה

RESPONSIVE READING

BEMA READER: If I could speak
the thin clear vein of thought
that is all entwined in webbing
left from long lack of honesty,

ALL: **I would speak now,
before the sun goes down.**

BEMA READER: If I could cry
the lakes of tears
to feed the thirsty nations
warring when the world
is ripe for working,

ALL: **I would cry now,
before the sun goes down.**

BEMA READER: If I could grow
a thousand arms
to wind beneath the earth
and find a thousand arms to
hold dignity,

ALL: **I would grow now,
before the sun goes down.**

BEMA READER: If every morning
I could bring new dawn
to bleeding heroes
who hold the sun up in the sky,

ALL: **I would bring now,
before the sun goes down.**

BEMA READER: If I could climb
a cliff and echo love
inside the chasm where
bullets echo back at me,

ALL: **I would climb now,
before the sun goes down.**

BEMA READER: If I could know
of courage,
(the child born from hearing
one's own sound and knowing it is true)

ALL: **I would know courage now,
before the sun goes down.** (Fanchon Shur)

READER: In our lives, many gates open before us and close behind us. Each year has been such a gate; and as the years have come and gone, gates have opened and shut. No power can reopen a gate which has swung shut. It is sealed forever.

READER: But a new gate has just opened before us and closed behind us. At this season of gate closings and gate openings, let us resolve to let the past be past, that we might give the future its due.

READER: The closing of a life gate, the passage from one moment to the next, recalls as well the passing of life itself. The dance of life spins to a halt, leaving only memories of steps taken, leaps tried, grace achieved and shared.

Memorial Nizkor נִזְכוֹר

BEMA READER: (Lights *yahrtzeit* candle.) *Nizkor.* We shall remember. Our tradition set aside this final gathering at the closing as a time of quiet remembrance. A time when, as we pass from one gate to another, we recall those who found an end to passings.

Zaykher Tzadeekeem זְכוֹר צְדִיקִים
(Remember the Righteous)

CANTOR DAVID MAIER:

Zay-kher tza-dee-keem

l'vra-khah, (2x)

L'vra-khah.

Zay-kher tza-dee-keem

l'vra-khah.

זְכוֹר צְדִיקִים

לְבָרְכָהּ, (2x)

לְבָרְכָהּ.

זְכוֹר צְדִיקִים

לְבָרְכָהּ.

(Remember the righteous in blessing.)

BEMA READER: There is no adequate memorial for the dead; indeed, memorials are often more for the living, a chance to remember a loved one with unabashed tears. A time to retell a story, recall a gesture, reaffirm a love.

READER: "I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground. So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind. Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned with lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned. Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave, gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind; quietly they go, the intelligent, the worthy, the brave; I know, but I do not approve. And I am not resigned." (Edna St. Vincent Millay)

RESPONSIVE READING

BEMA READER: Those who taught us to laugh and to cry, we remember them now.

ALL: Those who held us and whom we held, we remember them now.

BEMA READER: Those who loved us and whom we loved, we remember them now.

ALL: At the blowing of the wind in the chill of winter, at the opening of the buds in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

BEMA READER: When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

ALL: When we have decisions that are difficult to make, we remember them.

BEMA READER: When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

ALL: When we seek advice that does not come, when we are alone and afraid, we remember them.

BEMA READER: As long as we live, they too will live,

**ALL: For they are a part of us
As we remember them.**

ALL SING: Yeysh Kokhaveem

(Hebrew: Hannah Senesh; music & English: J. Klepper & D. Freedlander)
(Instrumental introduction)

There are stars up above
So far away we only see their light
Long after the star itself is gone.
And so it is with people that we loved,
Their memories keep shining
Ever brightly though their time with us is done.

But the stars that light up the darkest night:
These are the lights that guide us.
As we live our days, these are the ways
We remember, we remember.
As we live our days, these are the ways
We remember, we remember.

Yeysh ko-kha-veem
She-o-ram ma-gee-a ar-tzah,
Rak ka-a-sheer
Hem atz-mam av-du v'ey-nam.
Yeysh a-na-sheem she-zeev
Mey-eer zikh-ram
Ka-a-sheer hem atz-mam ay-nam.
O-od b'to-khey-ey-ey-ey-nu
O-rot ey-leh ha-mav-hee-keem
B'khash-kat ha-la-yeel.
Heym, heyM she-ma-reem l'a-dam
Et ha-de-rekh, et ha-de-rekh,
Heym, heyM she-ma-reem l'a-dam
Et ha-de-rekh, et ha-de-rekh,
Et ha-de-rekh, et ha-de-rekh.

יש פוכבים

Hannah Senesh
was a Hungarian
partisan who, at
the age of 23, was
captured and
executed by the
Nazis in Budapest.
In addition to
"Yesh Kokhavim,"
she is known for
the poem "Eli, Eli."

יש פוכבים
שאורם מגיע ארצה,
רק פאשר
הם עצמם אבדו ואינם.
יש אנשים שזיו
מאיר זכרם
פאשר הם עצמם אינם.
עוד בתוכינו
אורות אלה המבהיקים
בחשקת הליל.
הם, הם שמראים לאדם
את הדרך, את הדרך.
הם, הם שמראים לאדם
את הדרך, את הדרך,
את הדרך, את הדרך.

BEMA READER: We offer our loving tribute to all the people who gave us the gift of their lives. We recall in sorrow the six million who perished. The memory of their lives and of their fates touches us deeply.

We remember those in the Middle East, Africa, and other parts of the world who have seen families distraught from the ravages of war and pandemic illness.

As a community, we, also, have suffered many losses. If you would like to, please say the names of those loved ones you wish to remember.

BEMA READER: We also remember these former members of our community: To these names we add:

BEMA READER: As we reflect on the lives of those who died, we rise for the *Kaddish*, an affirmation of life. Please stand. We say these aspirations in their memory:

Kaddish

קדיש

(Written by Jon Dickman. Inspired by a poem by Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro and the traditional *Kaddish*. The first two lines are by Mike Goldhamer.)

**ALL: *Nit-ga-dal v'nit-ka-dash nish-mat a-dam:*
Let us magnify and sanctify the spirit of humanity.**

Let us acclaim the preciousness of life.

Let us show gratitude for life by approaching life with reverence.

Let us embrace the whole world, even as we wrestle with its parts.

**Let us fulfill, each of us in our own way,
our share in serving the world and seeking truth.**

**May our commitment to life help us to strengthen healing of spirit
and peace of mind.**

**May healing and peace permeate and comfort the people Israel
and all who dwell on Earth.**

And let us say: *Ken y'hee*. May it be so.

BEMA READER: Please be seated.

BEMA READER: When we remember those who have passed from us, when we memorialize our dead, we reaffirm our common humanity; we reaffirm our faith that life is one and life continues.

ALL: May the memory of those I loved in life, and still love in death, bless my thoughts and actions on this evening and in the year to come. May the special grace of their years reach out to touch my heart and inspire my deeds.

***Anee Ma'ameen* (I Believe)**

CANTOR DAVID MAIER:

A-nee ma-a-meen, (3x)

Beh-eh-moo-nah sh'lei-mah,

B'vee-at ha-sha-lom,

V'af al pee, she-yit-ma-mei-hah,

Eem kol-zeh a-nee ma-a-meen.

Eem kol-zeh a-khah-keh-loh,

B'khol-yom she-yah-vo,

A-nee ma-a-meen.

אָנִי מֵאֲמִין

אָנִי מֵאֲמִין (3x)

בְּאַמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה,

בְּבִיאַת הַשָּׁלוֹם,

וְאִף עַל פִּי שְׂיִתְמַהֲמָה,

עִם כָּל-זֶה אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין.

עִם כָּל-זֶה אֶחְכָּה-לוֹ,

בְּכָל-יוֹם שְׂיָבוֹא,

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין.

(I believe with perfect trust in the coming of peace. And even though it has not yet come, I still believe and will wait for it each day.)

BEMA READER: Today, as we think about what we would like to be, we begin with our shortcomings. Our mistakes and wrongdoings of the past year remain in our minds. And so on this day of *Yom Kippur*, day of truth and change, we say: We are sorry; we hope to do better. We say: ***Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat* עָמַם הַסְּלִיחָת** For the wrong we have done, we are truly sorry.

RESPONSIVE READING

עָמַם הַסְּלִיחָת

BEMA READER: For the wrong we have done, we are truly sorry.

ALL: For the wrong we have done, by not always speaking the truth, we are truly sorry. ***Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat.***

BEMA READER: For having been stubborn or lazy, we are sorry.

ALL: For the wrong we have done, by having hurt other people's feelings, we are sorry. ***Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat.***

BEMA READER: For having been unfair or spiteful, we are sorry.

ALL: For the wrong we have done, by speaking when we should have listened, we are sorry. *Ee-mam ha-s'lee khat.*

BEMA READER: For having remained silent when we should have spoken up, we are sorry.

ALL: For the wrong we have done, by being envious of others' good fortune, we are sorry. *Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat.*

BEMA READER: For losing our temper when we could have been calm, we are sorry.

ALL: For the wrong we have done, when we failed to honor and respect others, we are sorry. *Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat.*

For all these things and more, we are truly sorry, and we ask that those we have wronged understand us and forgive us. *Ee-mam ha-s'lee-khat.*

Tz'reekheem

CANTOR DAVID MAIER:

Tz'ree-kheem a-nakh-noo,

L'tah-hayr lee-bay-noo.

Tz'ree-kheem a-nakh-noo,

L'tah-hayr lee-bay-noo.

Kee ayn bah-noo ma-a-seem.

ALL SING:

T'hee ee-mah-noo,

Tz'da-kah va-khe-sed.

T'hee ee-mah-noo,

Tz'da-kah va-khe-sed

V'ho-shee-ay-noo.

(Repeat song.)

צָרְכִים

צָרְכִים אֲנַחְנוּ,

לְטַהַר לְבִינֵנוּ.

צָרְכִים אֲנַחְנוּ,

לְטַהַר לְבִינֵנוּ.

כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים.

תְּהִי עִמָּנוּ,

צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד.

תְּהִי עִמָּנוּ,

צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

(Deeds ring hollow if not from a pure heart filled with justice, mercy, benevolence, righteousness, and charity; all of which are required for the salvation of ourselves and humanity.)

BEMA READER: For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For the selfishness which sets us apart and alone,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For falling short of the admonitions of the spirit,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For losing sight of our unity,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

BEMA READER: For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the illusion of separateness,

ALL: We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

(Robert Eller Isaacs)

ALL SING: Mee Ha-Eesh (Chasidic Melody) מי האיש

Mee ha-eesh, heh-kha-feitz kha-yeem, מי האיש, החפץ חיים,

O-heiv ya-meem, o-heiv ya-meem אוהב ימים, אוהב ימים

lir-ot tov? לראות טוב?

(Repeat.) (Repeat.)

N'tzoor l'shon-kha mei-rah נצור לשונך מרע,

Oos-fa-te-kha m'da-ber mir-mah, ושפתיד מדבר מרמה,

Soor mei-rah va-ah-seyh tov, סור מרע ועש טוב,

Ba-keysh sha-lom v'rad-fei-hoo. בקש שלום ורדפהו.

(Repeat last verse.) (Repeat last verse.)

(Repeat first verse.) (Repeat first verse.)

(Who among you loves life, and longs to enjoy good for many days?
Then guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from deceitful
speech; turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
Psalm 34:13-15)

BEMA READER: May we be drenched with the longing for peace

That we may give ourselves over as the earth to the rain,

Until peace overflows our lives as living waters overflow the seas.

(Adapted from Marcia Falk)

ALL SING: Naaseh Shalom נעשה שלום

(We Shall Make Peace)

Na-a-seh sha-lom ba-o-lam, נעשה שלום בעולם,

Na-a-seh sha-lom a-ley-nu נעשה שלום עלינו

V'al kol ha-o-lam, ועל כל העולם,

V'eem-ru, eem-ru sha-lom. ואמרו, אמרו שלום.

(Repeat.) (Repeat.)

Na-a-seh sha-lom, נעשה שלום,

Na-a-seh sha-lom, נעשה שלום,

Sha-lom a-ley-nu שלום עלינו

V'al kol ha-o-lam. ועל כל העולם.

(We shall make peace in the world.

We shall bring peace for ourselves and the world.)

BEMA READER: And now, as this year's *Yom Kippur* comes to an end, we say, with Jews all around the world:

ALL: Let the year upon which we have entered be for us, for Israel, and for all humanity:

A year of goodness and prosperity.

A year of love, friendship, and comfort.

A year of peace and contentment, of joy and spiritual welfare.

A year of virtue and right choices.

A year which finds the hearts of parents united with the hearts of children.

A year of health in mind and body.

L'sha-nah to-vah oo-m'too-kah.

A good and sweet year. *Sha-lom!*

BEMA READER: Everyone please rise.

ALL SING: *L'Shanah Tovah*

L'sha-nah to-vah tey-kha-tey-moon,

L'sha-nah to-vah tey-kha-tey-moon;

A good year, a year of peace,

L'sha-nah to-vah!

(Repeat.)

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תַּחְתְּמוֹן,

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תַּחְתְּמוֹן;

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה!

(Repeat.)

(May you be sealed for a good year!)

תְּקִיעַה שׁוֹפָר:

Shofar is sounded (Larry Kruss blows the shofar):

תְּקִיעַה שְׁבָרִים תְּרוּעָה

תְּקִיעַה-גְּדוֹלָה

**TEKIAH SHEVARIM TERUAH
TEKIAH-GEDOLAH**

ALL: לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה!

L'sha-nah to-vah oo-m'too-kah!

A GOOD AND SWEET YEAR!



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Addendum

כָּל-נִדְרֵי *Kol Nidrei*

"If a man vows a vow to the Eternal, or swears an oath imposing an obligation upon himself, he shall not break his word; all that comes out of his mouth he shall do." *Numbers 30:3*

At our most sacred, most solemn time, Jews assembled in synagogues hear their cantor chant an Aramaic formula of absolution for all vows (*Kol Nidrei*), promises, and resolutions that will be incurred in the coming year, and in the Sephardic ritual, the past year. The words are barely understood, their precise meanings unclear to all but scholars of the arcane world of ancient Hebrew oaths, vows, and promises. But oh, that melody, and the atmosphere of expectation, hope, and release it brings:

"All vows, oaths, obligations and substitute forms (designated *nidrei, esarei, chamei, konamei, chinuyei, kinusei* and *shevu'ot*), which we have vowed, sworn, declared, and imposed upon ourselves from this *Yom Kippur* until the next *Yom Kippur* may it come upon us for good. Regarding them all, we regret them. Let them all be released, forgiven, erased, null and void. They are not valid nor are they in force. Our vows are not vows. our prohibitive vows are not prohibitive vows. Our oaths are not oaths."

How and why did the practice of granting total absolution from all vows and oaths at *Yom Kippur* evolve? You might expect that this would be the time to take our obligations more seriously. In the Bible, a vow (Hebrew root "*neder*," to set apart for sacred use) denoted a personal obligation made with God, and did not appear to pertain to social or commercial commitments. It involved either the dedication of an animal, object, or a person to God (called a *korban*), or some form of self-sacrifice or abstinence, to win or express gratitude for God's favor:

"I must fulfill my vows to You, O God; I will render offerings of thanksgiving to You. For You have saved me from death, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life." *Psalms 56:13-14*.

Some of the more prominent biblical vows are called by scholars "conditional vows of dedication", because they are made dependent upon a favor being granted by God. Thus, Jacob vows that the Eternal shall be his personal god, to whom he shall tithe his wealth, in return for divine protection and sustenance (*Genesis 28:20-22*); Hannah prays to God for a son and vows to dedicate him to God's service (*1 Samuel 1:11*); Jephthah asks for a military victory, vowing to sacrifice whoever is first to greet him from his house upon his triumphant return (*Judges 11:30-31*), and the fact that it was his only child seems to indicate that these vows could not be revoked.

Vows of abstinence or self-denial (termed "*nidrei issur*"-*issur* meaning to bind, to

prohibit, to obligate) are mentioned in *Numbers*, Chapter 30, particularly the Nazarite vow, by which a person dedicated his or her life to God, eschewing wine and all fermented grape products, never cutting his hair, nor coming into contact with the dead. An oath, on the other hand, is a curse to which the swearer subjects herself or a loved one, in the event the oath is violated: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand...(the curse is not mentioned in the Hebrew, as a precaution; later translations inserted "forget its cunning," i.e. wither)" *Psalms* 137:5, and "So shall God do to me and more," are typical formulas of ancient oaths, avoiding any mention of the actual curse. Though fathers and husbands possessed a limited authority to revoke the vows of their minor daughters and wives, biblical law made no other provision for the dissolution of vows and oaths. Failure to make good on one incurred divine punishment, it was believed, and biblical writers attempted to discourage the people from making any vows at all.

By the beginning of the Common Era, the making of vows and the swearing of oaths were frequent occurrences of every day life. They were used to convince people of one's sincerity or credibility, to coerce or persuade, even to intimidate. Vows and oaths were used to ensure the success of various undertakings and enterprises. (A type of vow frequently cited in the rabbinic literature involved a situation in which a person prohibited himself from enjoying the benefit of some article, object, or person if he didn't fulfill his promise. Called a "prohibitive vow," the votary declared, "this item is prohibited to me like a *korban*" [offering to God]. Substitute formulaic words were often used for "*korban*" and they are the *konamei*, *chinuyei*, *kinusei* and *shevu'ot* synonyms mentioned in *Kol Nidrei*.)

This abuse of vows, and the potential for harm from malevolent forces or divine punishment, were reasons the rabbis developed procedures to annul vows. That the *Torah* provided no basis for the nullification of vows was freely admitted in rabbinic literature (*Mishnah Chagigah*, 1:8, where the rules about release from vows were characterized as "hovering in the air with nothing to support them"). Nevertheless, the *Mishnah* also viewed the nullification of vows as a power vested in the rabbis: only a sage, or if none was available, a *bet din* [religious court] of three knowledgeable laymen, could annul a vow. The contents of the vow had to be revealed, as there was no blanket dissolution of unspecified vows.

The grounds for nullifying a vow involved finding a loophole, and was based on the concept of regret or "*charatah*" (i.e., had I known this, I would not have made the vow). The sage had to establish a fact, circumstance, or consequence that the votary failed to consider. Since she neglected to understand all the ramifications of her vow, she made the vow by mistake. By resorting to a legal fiction, the sage absolved rather than revoked, as if the vow had never existed.

The rabbis developed legal formulas to annul some vows retroactively. *Kol Nidrei* is apparently one such formula. Its original purpose was to protect people from the dire consequences that would ensue for having failed to complete **their** vows. *Kol Nidrei* is believed to have originated among the Jewish population of Babylonia in the 8th century of the Common Era. (An earlier belief that it

originated among the Marranos of 15th century Spain who were forced to convert to Christianity is not true.) Over several centuries, it spread to wherever there were Jews, and became a part of the High Holy Day rites of atonement and forgiveness, testifying to its powerful, universal popularity. Leading rabbis of their day often attempted to restrict its powers or eliminate it entirely, but ordinary Jews refused to give it up. The rabbis were trying to combat the popular imagination that saw *Kol Nidrei* as a magical incantation, capable of not only annulling vows, but also neutralizing the demons and evil spirits believed to threaten those who did not fulfill their promises. Later generations, laity and rabbis alike, often ascribed to *Kol Nidrei* the power to annul all vows, including those made in commercial transactions, or sworn to before a civil court of law or government office.

As late as the 19th century, some European countries retained the medieval institution of the "Jewish Oath." Any Jew required to swear an oath in court, or before a government official, was first made to stand in his synagogue, holding a *Torah* scroll, wearing *tallit* [fringed prayer shawl] and *tefillin* [phylacteries], and there swear that his civil oath would not be revoked by a *bet din* or by *Kol Nidrei*.

Since the original version of *Kol Nidrei* was a retroactive nullification of vows, a powerful device, it apparently encouraged the perception that it had the power to annul all vows, not just those made with God or imposed upon oneself. The 12th century French Talmudic master, *Rabbenu Tam*, resolved to clarify its proper legal status and limit its authority to annul vows.

He proposed that *Kol Nidrei* be understood to refer to future vows, and substituted the words "from this *Yom Kippur* until next *Yom Kippur*, may it come upon us for good". He specifically ruled that it pertained only to vows people impose upon themselves. It took many centuries for this change to the future tense to be almost universally accepted among Ashkenazic Jews. Many prominent rabbis retained the past tense version, while accepting the limitation on the vows *Kol Nidrei* had authority to annul. Others claimed *Kol Nidrei* was an act of *teshuvah* [repentance], or that in uprooting the vow it prevented anything from standing in the way of atonement. The change has never been accepted by Jews of Spanish origin, while Middle Eastern and North African communities of Jews apparently incorporated language for past and future vows in their versions.

Kol Nidrei is emphatically a legal artifice; it is not a prayer and God is not mentioned. The need to associate the annulment of vows with atonement and divine forgiveness explains why two quotations from *Torah* immediately follow the chanting of *Kol Nidrei*:

"The whole Israelite community and the stranger residing among them shall be forgiven, for it happened to the entire people through error." *Numbers* 15:26

And the Eternal said: "I have pardoned according to your plea." *Numbers* 14:20

Reform Judaism initially banned *Kol Nidrei* from the High Holiday prayerbooks as

an embarrassment and as a symbol of all that Jews represented to the modern gentile world. It was a superstitious remnant of a Jewry they were trying to leave behind; it had no place in the views and habits of modern civilization. The melody was retained and many different prayers and readings were substituted. *Kol Nidrei* was not officially reinstated into the liturgy until the 1978 edition of the Gates of Repentance, which we [Reform Jews] use today.

If some of the ancient rabbis were correct, that ethical and legal objections are outweighed by the need to forgive ourselves for unfulfilled promises in order to attain the necessary state of atonement during *Yom Kippur*, then *Kol Nidrei* will be with us for a long time.

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This article is indebted to the guidance and scholarship contained in the following two works:

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